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ABSTRACT

Intended for students taking the Grade 12 Examination in English 30 in Alberta, Canada, this reading test (to be administered along with the questions booklet) contains 10 short reading selections taken from fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama, including the following: "At the Age at Which Mozart Was Dead Already" (Ellen Goodman); "Embassy" (W. H. Auden); an excerpt from "Julia" (Lillian Hellman); "Girl and Horse, 1928" (Margaret Atwood); an excerpt from "Antony and Cleopatra" (William Shakespeare); "That Yellow Prairie Sky" (Robert Kroetsch); "Three Cheers for the Snail Darter" (James L. Buckley); "David" (Josephine Miles); "Springtime" (Claire Martin); and "Marrying Absurd" (Joan Didion). (EL)

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READINGS BOOKLET

GRADE 12

DIPLOMA EXAMINATION

English 30

Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

June 1985

Alberta Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION
ENGLISH 30

PART B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

READINGS BOOKLET

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Part B of the English 30 Diploma Examination has 80 questions in the Questions Booklet and 10 reading selections in the Readings Booklet.

CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE AN ENGLISH 30 QUESTIONS BOOKLET AND AN ENGLISH 30 READINGS BOOKLET.

YOU WILL HAVE 2 HOURS TO COMPLETE THIS EXAMINATION.

You may **NOT** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

JUNE 1985

I. Read "At the Age at Which Mozart Was Dead Already" and answer questions 1 to 8 from your Questions Booklet.

AT THE AGE AT WHICH MOZART WAS DEAD ALREADY

Let others freak out at turning thirty or forty. Let others greet their new decades with $12-an-ounce moisturizing cream and anxiety attacks. Not me. I'm no more mesmerized when the zeros click into place in my life than when the speedometer turns over a new 10,000-mile mark.

But this odd-numbered birthday is different. This one has been lurking around, waiting to ambush my mind. You see, at the age I'm about to be, Mozart was dead already.

Now why, you ask, would someone whose musical career ended in the college chorus line of *Guys and Dolls* be worrying about Mozart?

Because Mozart has always been a convenient symbolic figure in my life. Someone to make me feel totally inadequate. Someone not to be able to live up to. Someone to make me miserable. Nice healthy things like that. I mean, if you want to feel like a wipe-out, there is always the specter of old Wolfgang inking in the G clefs.

Remember when you were five and thrilled at being able to tie your shoelaces? Mozart was composing minuets. Remember when you were thirty and still hadn't "found yourself"? Mozart had finished *The Marriage of Figaro*. Need I go on?

Of course, Wolfgang isn't the only such handy source of low self-esteem and discontent. In the third grade there was always one kid who was on the gold book when you were on the green. There was one guy in college who had his first play produced on Broadway while you were completing your language requirement.

I had two friends publishing novels in New York the year that I was writing obituaries in Detroit.

I suspect that most of us were geared at a young age to all those grades and annual reports. There wasn't any such thing as an overachiever back then. He was just someone ahead of us. Someone to chase.

Now, however, it strikes me that there may be some advantage in arriving at the age at which Mozart was dead already. You don't have Wolfgang to kick yourself around with anymore. It occurs to you that you are far too old to be precocious, and you'll never be a Young Achiever. You'll never again be able to write *Don Giovanni* at thirty-one.

Instead of whipping yourself to mush after the goals of others, you begin slowly to reset those goals. All this is called learning to live with yourself.

You stop living for *Who's Who* or the obituary column. You begin to give up the notion of living for the record, for others, or for the fleeting immortality of card catalogues and Chamber of Commerce plaques. As one friend put it: "If I'm not going to be Shakespeare, I might as well enjoy life."

At the age at which Mozart was dead already, you begin to gain what some people call perspective and others call "losing the old drive" and others call mellowness. For a day or so you might be repulsively philosophical. You might ruminate on the fact

Continued

that the earth will be cold in a billion years or so, that most people's life work is their life, and that there's not a whole lot of point in just making points.

The next trick, I suppose, is to learn to accept your limitations without trapping yourself in them and to find some of the important lines: the line between eternal dissatisfaction and smugness, the line between anxiety and boredom, the line between being driven and being immobilized. The line that we describe as a balanced life.

As for me, I may get there yet. I have at least finally realized one truth that comes with the candles: I'd rather be alive than be Mozart.

Ellen Goodman

II. Read "Embassy" and answer questions 9 to 15 from your Questions Booklet.

EMBASSY

As evening fell the day's oppression lifted;
Far peaks came into focus; it had rained:
Across wide lawns and cultured flowers drifted
The conversation of the highly trained.

Two gardeners watched them pass and priced their shoes:
A chauffeur waited, reading in the drive,
For them to finish their exchange of views;
It seemed a picture of the private life.

Far off, no matter what good they intended,
The armies waited for a verbal error
With all the instruments for causing pain:

And on the issue of their charm depended
A land laid waste, with all its young men slain,
Its women weeping, and its towns in terror.

W. H. Auden

III. Read the excerpt from *Julia* and answer questions 16 to 25 from your Questions Booklet.

from JULIA

LILLIAN (*whispers*): Tell me what to say to you.
JULIA: It's all right. Nothing will happen now, everything's fine now.
LILLIAN: I want to say something.
JULIA: I know.
LILLIAN: How long do we have?
JULIA: Not long.
LILLIAN: You still look like nobody else. (*pause*) Why do you have the crutches?
Pause
JULIA (*quickly*): I have a false leg!
LILLIAN: What?
JULIA: I have a false leg!
LILLIAN: No! I don't want to hear that. Don't tell me that!
JULIA (*sharply*): No tears, Lilly.
LILLIAN: I'm sorry.
JULIA: It's done. It's what it is.
LILLIAN: I don't want to hear about it, please, just let me look at you.
JULIA: You have to hear about it, you have to hear about everything. (*taking* LILLIAN's hand) Your fingers are cold, here. . . Everything's fine and what I want you to do now is take off your hat, the way you would if it — Lilly, listen to me, you aren't listening.
LILLIAN: I'm listening, I am.
JULIA: Take off your hat, as if it were too hot in here. Comb your hair. Put your hat on the seat between us. Do as I tell you. . . Make conversation. . . It has to be this way.
Lillian looks around the room. Then she looks at JULIA. *She takes off the hat.*
JULIA (*calmly*): Who were you with in Paris? Good friends?
LILLIAN: Yes, Good friends. But they don't know anything about this.
She puts the hat on the seat between them.
JULIA: Get your comb.
LILLIAN: Comb. . .
She reaches for her purse. Opens it. Looks for the comb. The purse is full.
LILLIAN: I still carry too much.
JULIA (*looking in purse*): There it is, take it out and use it.
LILLIAN *takes out the comb. Starts to comb her hair back.*
JULIA: Keep talking to me. I read your play. Don't look down. Look at me. Be natural. You look so very well.
During this JULIA *has pulled the hat into her open coat. Then she'll proceed to pin it deep inside the lining.*
LILLIAN: Did you like it? My play?
JULIA: I'm proud of you. It was wonderful.
LILLIAN: But my second play failed.
JULIA: I know. I heard. Are you writing your third?

Continued

LILLIAN: I'm writing it.

JULIA: Now, I'm going to the toilet. You come with me. If the waiter tries to help me up, wave him away.

They start on, toward the washroom. We can see a man, ALBERT, *bringing caviar, wine to their table.*

JULIA: What's your new play about?

LILLIAN: I don't know. I'm not sure yet. Shall I come with you?

JULIA: (*in German regarding the caviar — to* ALBERT): Thank you very much, Albert.

They reach the washroom door.

LILLIAN: Shall I come in with you?

JULIA: No, the toilet door will lock. If anybody tries to open it, then knock very hard and call to me. But I don't think that will happen.

JULIA *opens the toilet door. Moves in. As the door closes, her crutch is at a wrong angle. It gets caught. She pulls irritably at the crutch. There's some humiliation in the gesture. The door closes.* LILLIAN *waits outside the door. (Some* PEOPLE *are moving in to be seated. One of them is the* FAT MAN *we saw on the train. He is alone. He moves to a small table against the wall and takes a newspaper from his side pocket.)*

LILLIAN *looks toward their table. The wine and caviar have been placed on it. (She looks back toward the* FAT MAN *at his table.) She looks at other faces. They all seem to be looking at her. The door to the toilet opens.* JULIA *moves out. She smiles at* LILLIAN. *She starts slowly back toward their table.*

JULIA: Nothing will happen now. We're all right now. I want you to know this. You've been better than a good friend to me. You've done something important. . . It's my money you brought in. We can save five hundred people, maybe. If we bargain right, maybe a thousand.

LILLIAN: Jews?

JULIA: About half are Jews. Political people. Socialists, Communists, plain old Catholic dissenters. Jews aren't the only people who suffer here. But that's enough of that. We can only do today what we can do today. And today you did it for us.

She drinks some wine. LILLIAN *drinks too.*

JULIA: Do you need something stronger?

LILLIAN: No.

JULIA: We have to talk fast now. There isn't much time.

LILLIAN: How much?

Some people move by.

LILLIAN (*quiet rage*): What is it? Why is it like this?

JULIA (*studies* LILLIAN *a moment*): Are you as angry a woman as you were a child?

LILLIAN: I try not to be. It isn't easy.

JULIA: I like your anger. Don't let people talk you out of it.

JULIA *reacts to something OFFSCREEN.*

JULIA: The man who will take care of you has just come into the street.

LILLIAN: But we haven't talked. We've had no time. I need more time.

JULIA: Now I want you to stand up. Take the hat. . . Listen to me. Put the hat back on, and then say goodbye to me and then go. Walk across the street.

LILLIAN *has become visibly upset.*

JULIA: The man will see that you get on the train safely. Someone else will stay with

Continued

you 'til Warsaw tomorrow morning. He's in Car A, Second Class, compartment thirteen. Zweite Klasse. Say it!

LILLIAN: Zweite Klasse.

JULIA: Compartment 13. Abteilung Dreizehn. Say it!

LILLIAN: Abteilung Dreizehn. I don't want to leave you. I want to stay with you longer.

JULIA: No. Something could still go wrong. We aren't sure who anyone is anymore. LILLIAN *waits for a beat, then puts on the hat. As she does:*

JULIA: Write to me from Moscow to American Express in Paris. Someone picks up for me every few weeks. (*takes* LILLIAN'*s hand and raises it to her lips*) Oh, yes. . . Oh, yes, my beloved friend. *She kisses* LILLIAN'*s hand. Another pause. Then* JULIA *brings her hands down.*

JULIA: Leave!. . . (*sharp*) LEAVE!

LILLIAN *gets up quickly as if powered by something outside of herself.*

WIDER ANGLE — NIGHT

LILLIAN *turns and moves to door. When she gets there she stops, turns, looks back at* JULIA, *who is holding her glass of wine.* LILLIAN *seems to take a small step toward her,* JULIA *quickly shakes her head, looks at another part of the room.* LILLIAN *turns and moves out through the revolving door.*

Lillian Hellman

IV. Read "Girl and Horse, 1928" and answer questions 26 to 32 from your Questions Booklet.

GIRL AND HORSE, 1928

You are younger than I am, you are
someone I never knew, you stand
under a tree, your face half-shadowed,
holding the horse by its bridle.

Why do you smile? Can't you
see the apple blossoms falling around
you, snow, sun, snow, listen, the tree
dries and is being burnt, the wind

is bending your body, your face
ripples like water where did you go
But no, you stand there exactly
the same, you can't hear me, forty

years ago you were caught by light
and fixed in that secret
place where we live, where we believe
nothing can change, grow older.

(On the other side
of the picture, the instant
is over, the shadow
of the tree has moved. You wave,

then turn and ride
out of sight through the vanished
orchard, still smiling
as though you do not notice)

Margaret Atwood

V. Read the excerpt from *Antony and Cleopatra* and answer questions 33 to 42 from your Questions Booklet.

from the play ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, Act I, Scene i

After the murder of Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire was ruled by three men — Mark Antony, Lepidus, and Octavius Caesar, Julius Caesar's nephew. Antony, having been given the eastern sphere to rule, had gone to Alexandria, and there he had fallen in love with Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt.

Alexandria. A room in Cleopatra's palace.

(*Enter* DEMETRIUS *and* PHILO, *friends of* ANTONY)

PHILO: Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure. Those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated[1] Mars, now bend, now turn
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front; his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust. Look, where they come!
(*Flourish. Enter* ANTONY *and* CLEOPATRA, *with attendants*)
Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar[2] of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool. Behold and see.
CLEOPATRA: If it be love indeed, tell me how much.
ANTONY: There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.
CLEOPATRA: I'll set a bourn[3] how far to be belov'd.
ANTONY: Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.
(*Enter* MESSENGERS)
MESSENGER: News, my good lord, from Rome.
ANTONY: Grates me: the sum.
CLEOPATRA: Nay, hear them, Antony.
Fulvia perchance is angry; or, who knows
If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent
His powerful mandate to you: "Do this, or this;
Take in that kingdom, and enfranchise that;
Perform't, or else we damn thee."
ANTONY: How, my love!

[1]plated — covered with plates of armor
[2]triple pillar — Antony is one of the ruling triumvirate
[3]bourn — boundary, limit

CLEOPATRA: Perchance? Nay, and most like.
You must not stay here longer; your dismission
Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony.
Where's Fulvia's process? — Caesar's, I would say. Both?
Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen,
Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine
Is Caesar's homager; else so thy cheek pays shame
When shrill-tongu'd Fulvia scolds. The messengers!
ANTONY: Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man; the nobleness of life
Is to do thus (*embracing*) when such a mutual pair
And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,
On pain of punishment, the world to weet[4]
We stand up peerless.
CLEOPATRA: Excellent falsehood!
(*Aside*) Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her?
I'll seem the fool I am not. — Antony
Will be himself.
ANTONY: But stirr'd by Cleopatra.
Now, for the love of Love and her soft hours,
Let's not confound the time with conference harsh.
There's not a minute of our lives should stretch
Without some pleasure now. What sport tonight?
CLEOPATRA: Hear the ambassadors.
ANTONY: Fie, wrangling queen!
Whom everything becomes — to chide, to laugh,
To weep; [whose] every passion fully strives
To make itself, in thee, fair and admir'd!
No messenger but thine; and all alone
To-night we'll wander through the streets and note
The qualities of people. Come, my queen;
Last night you did desire it. — Speak not to us.
(*Exeunt* ANTONY *and* CLEOPATRA, *with their attendants*)
DEMETRIUS: Is Caesar with Antonius priz'd so slight?
PHILO: Sir, sometimes, when he is not Antony,
He comes too short of that great property
Which still should go with Antony.
DEMETRIUS: I am full sorry
That he approves the common liar, who
Thus speaks of him at Rome; but I will hope
Of better deeds to-morrow. Rest you happy!
(*Exeunt*)

William Shakespeare

[4]weet — know

VI. Read "That Yellow Prairie Sky" and answer questions 43 to 50 from your Questions Booklet.

THAT YELLOW PRAIRIE SKY

I was looking at the back of a new dollar bill, at that scene of somewhere on the prairies, and all of a sudden I was looking right through it and I wasn't in Toronto at all anymore — I was back out west. The clouds were moving overhead as if we were traveling and I pointed to that fence that's down and I said, "Look't there, Julie, that must be Tom's place. He hasn't fixed that piece of fence these thirty years." And then I noticed the elevator wasn't getting any closer.

It never does.

My brother Tom, he was quite a guy for women. . . . I guess I wasn't far behind. Anyway, we spent the winter courting those two girls. . . .

. . .Tom and I didn't miss a dance or a hayride or a skating party within trotting range of the finest team of dapple grays in the country. We didn't have all the fancy courting facilities that folks here in the east have, but we had lots of space and lots of sky. And we didn't miss much on a frosty night, the old buffalo robe doing whatever was necessary to keep warm. . . .

I guess we did pretty well. I remember the night we were driving home from a bean supper and dance, and Julie said, "You're getting pretty free with your behavior."

"Well, you're going to be my wife soon enough," I said.

"It can't be soon enough," she whispered, and she pushed my arm away. Women are always contrary that way.

Tom and Kay were curled up at the back of the sleigh and they couldn't hear us. . . .

"Let's plan," she said. . . . "Kay said that she and Tom are going to build a house this fall. . . . Why can't we build a house?"

"We got a shack on our place."

"Shack is right. One room and a lean-to."

"It's a roof."

"Kay and Tom are going to get a new bedroom suite and a new stove, and Kay is going to start making new curtains. I could start making new curtains too if we were going to have a new house with lots of windows."

"If we get a good crop, okay. But I got enough stashed away to get married on and put a crop in, and that's it."

"I want to make a nice home for you. We'll have a family."

"We might," I said. "But things'll have to pick up."

"Promise," she said.

"Sure enough," I said.

"I mean promise we'll have a new house."

"Don't you think it would be better to wait and see?"

She didn't answer.

"We might flood out or dry out or freeze out. How do I know?"

She still didn't answer.

Continued

"What if it's a grasshopper year? What about wireworms and wild oats and rust and buckwheat?"

"Promise me," she said. "I don't even think you love me."

That was her final word.

. . .We sat in that sleigh for an hour, our breath freezing in our scarves (twenty-seven below, it was), wrapped in a buffalo robe and in each other's arms and never once did she speak. To a young fellow twenty-two years old it didn't make much sense. But I didn't push her away. She was soft and warm and quiet; and I thought she had fallen asleep.

"Okay," I said, finally. "Okay okay okay. I promise."

She snuggled closer.

We had a double wedding in the spring.

Tom's father-in-law fixed up two granaries near the house and we held the reception at his place. Everybody was there. . . . Tom came over to where I was watching the sky for a nice day and he shook my hand.

"We're the luckiest pair of duck hunters this side of the fourth meridian," he said. "We've each got a half section that's almost paid for, and we've got a big crop to put in that'll put us on our feet, and we've each got the prettiest girl in the country. How do you like being a married man?"

"Yes, sir," I said. . . . "This here love business is the clear McCoy.". . .

The sky was the garment of love. It was a big sky, freckled with the stars of the universe; a happy sky, shrouding all the pain. It was the time of spring, and spring is love, and in the night sky arrow after arrow of honking geese winged across the yellow moon, driving winter from the world.

Right after the wedding we moved into the shack and really went to work. I was busy from morning till night putting in a big crop, while Julie helped with the chores and looked after her little chicks and put in a big garden. When the crop was in we started on the summer fallow, and before that was done it was haying time.

At noon she brought dinner out to me in the field, out in the sun and the wind, and we sat side by side and talked and laughed, and the dust from my face got on hers sometimes, and sometimes I didn't get started quite on time. And the weather was good too. . . .

I remember one Sunday we went over to Tom's for a chicken supper. Tom and Dad and I talked about the way the crops were coming along and where to get binder repairs, and we made arrangements to help each other with the cutting and stooking.

The womenfolk talked about their gardens and their chickens until Julie mentioned the drapes she was sewing.

"I'm going to have one of those living room parlors," she said, "one of those living room parlors with lots of windows, like in the magazines, and I'm making drapes for that kind of window."

"I think I will too," Kay said. "Tom cut some of the nicest plans out of last week's *Free Press*. I hope the fall stays nice. . . . And since Tom is afraid he'll have to help with the washing, he's going to get me a new washing machine."

"We might pick up a secondhand car," Julie said, "if the crop on our breaking doesn't go down because it's too heavy."

I had mentioned it'd be something to tinker on during the winter.

It wasn't long before Julie was talking about the washing machine and Kay was

Continued

talking about a secondhand car. Wheat was a good price that year.

We menfolk laughed at the women and we found a few things in the Eaton's catalog that we could use ourselves. It seemed that somebody was always coming up with something new that we couldn't possibly do without.

After supper we all walked out to have a look at Tom's crop. Tom could even make a gumbo patch grow wheat.

I guess it happened a week later. I mean, the storm. Julie was working on her drapes. It was a hot day, too hot and too still, and in the afternoon the clouds began to pile up in the west. . . .

The storm came like a cloud of white dust high in the sky: not black or gray like a rain cloud, but white; and now it was rolling across the heavens with a brute unconcern for the mites below, and after awhile came the first dull roar. The hot, dead air was suddenly cool, stirring to a breeze, and then a white wall of destruction bridged earth and sky and moved across the land and crashed across the fields of ripening grain. . . .

In fifteen minutes it was all over and the sun was shining as pretty as you please. Only there was no reason for the sun to shine. Our garden and our fields were flat, and the west window was broken, and half the shingles were gone from the shack. The leaves were half stripped from the trees, and the ground was more white than black and, I remember, the cat found a dead robin.

My wife didn't say a word.

I hitched up old Mag to the buggy and Julie and I drove over to Tom's place.

Tom was sitting on the porch steps with his head in his hands, and Kay was leaning on the fence, looking at her garden. It looked like they hadn't been talking much either.

I got out and walked over to Tom, and Julie stayed in the buggy.

"A hundred percent," I said.

"The works," he said. "And all I got is enough insurance to feed us this winter or to buy a ticket to hell out of here."

"The same with me," I said.

We couldn't think of much to say.

All of a sudden Tom almost shouted at Kay: "Say it and get it over with. If you want we'll go to the city and I'll get a job. I can get on a construction gang. They're paying good now. We'll get a washing machine and a secondhand car." He looked at his wheat fields, beaten flat. "We'll make a payment and get our own house."

He kicked at a hailstone.

"A house with big windows for my new drapes," Kay added.

Tom got up and he walked to the gate where Julie sat in the buggy. Kay and I, we stood there watching him, almost afraid of the storm in his eyes, and Kay looked at me as if I should stop him before he went and grabbed a pitchfork or something.

"Tom, I was joking," Kay said. "I don't need fancy curtains and a washing machine. And we never needed a car before. Did we, Tom? We got enough for us and Ma and Dad. Haven't we, Tom? And we got next year."

Tom snorted at that idea. He kicked open the gate and walked out toward the barn. There was so much helpless anger in him he couldn't talk.

Kay called after him. "We still got this, Tom." She was kind of crying. She was

pointing at the black dirt that showed through the broken grass. "Look, Tom, we still got this."

Tom, he stopped in the middle of the yard and he turned around. For a long time
135 he was only looking at Kay's empty hand.

All of a sudden he bent down like he was going to say a prayer or something. And he scooped up a handful of hailstones, and he flung them back at the sky.

Like I say, my wife; she didn't say a word.

Robert Kroetsch

VII. Read "Three Cheers for the Snail Darter" and answer questions 51 to 59 from your Questions Booklet.

THREE CHEERS FOR THE SNAIL DARTER

Few laws in recent years have caused such apoplexy among so-called practical men of affairs as the Endangered Species Act of 1973. It first burst upon the public consciousness two years ago, when it was invoked twice to scuttle projected dams in Tennessee and Maine; the first time, to save a nondescript little fish called the snail darter, and the other, an inconspicuous flower called the furbish lousewort.

It is idiotic, cry the practical men of affairs, to allow sentimentality over a few hundred weeds or minnows to stand in the way of progress. It is irresponsible, reply the conservationists, to destroy forever a unique pool of genetic material; and the conservationists can marshal a host of non-sentimental arguments in support of what many consider to be the most important environmental legislation of this decade.

Having said this, I can hear the p.m.o.a.'s swallow in disbelief as they ask, "Of what possible dollars-and-cents value is the snail darter?" To which conservationists will have to reply, "Other than having inadvertently saved us from a costly mistake, none that we *know* of." And that, paradoxically, is one of the major scientific justifications for the Endangered Species Act.

Our biological knowledge is still so pitifully small that it is less than likely that science can identify the immediate worth of any given species. The roster of species directly useful to man, however, is far greater than most of us would suspect; and we know just enough about the extent of our ignorance to understand how huge our untapped biological resources must be. It is therefore imprudent to allow an estimate of immediate worth, as perceived by men trained to think in terms only of near-term goals, to be the basis for deciding whether a given species is to be preserved.

What good is a snail darter? As practical men measure "good," probably none; but we simply don't know. What value would they have placed on the cowpox virus before Jenner; or on penicillium molds (other than those inhabiting blue cheese) before Fleming; or on wild rubber trees before Goodyear learned to vulcanize their sap? Yet the life of almost every American is profoundly different because of these species. The list goes on. As we squash the fruit fly on our kitchen counter, are we aware of its importance to medical research? And who would have thought the armadillo would prove of critical importance in the study of leprosy?

Fully 40 per cent of modern drugs have been derived from nature. Most of the food man eats comes from only about twenty out of the thousands of plants known to be edible. And even those currently being cultivated require the preservation of large pools of genetic material on which plant scientists can draw in order to produce more useful strains or to restore the vigor of the highly inbred varieties that have revolutionized agriculture in recent years. . . .

. . .Extinction is one of the few processes that man cannot reverse. In the course of time the dams in question will have silted up and outlived their usefulness; but it will be too late then to decide that we would like to have the snail darter and the furbish lousewort back. If man cannot restore a species, though, he is fully capable of destroying it; which he is now doing at an astonishing rate. This century has witnessed over half the extinctions of animal species known to have occurred during recorded history; and,

largely because of the vast scale on which tropical rain forests are now being cut around the world, it is estimated that by the year 2000 upwards of a million additional species — about 20 per cent of those now in existence — may become extinct. . . .

As living creatures, the more we understand of biological processes, the more wisely we will be able to manage ourselves. Thus the deliberate extermination of a species can be an act of recklessness. By permitting high rates of extinction to continue, we are limiting the potential growth of biological knowledge. In essence, the process is tantamount to book-burning; but it is even worse, in that it involves books yet to be deciphered and read. . . .

It is this that lends the Endangered Species Act its special significance. It recognizes values, be they ethical or esthetic, that transcend the purely practical and admit to awe in the face of the diversity of creation. Not everyone will be moved by them, and they no more lend themselves to a cost-effective calculus than does a Bach chorale. But surely it is an act of unseemly arrogance to decree the extinction of a unique form of life without compelling justification. Such an act is irreversible, and it diminishes by however small a fraction the biological diversity that has come down to us from eons past.

Edmund Burke reminds us that the men and women of any generation are but "temporary possessors and life-renters" who "should not think it among their rights to cut off the entail, or commit waste on the inheritance," lest they "leave to those who come after them a ruin instead of a habitation."

That, in sum, is the purpose of the Endangered Species Act and its ultimate justification: to protect our natural inheritance against the awesome waste that this generation of temporary possessors has proven itself so prone to commit.

James L. Buckley

VIII. 'Read "David" and answer questions 60 to 66 from your Questions Booklet.

The poem is based on a Biblical story in which David, a young man of God, kills the enemy, the giant Goliath, with a slingshot and a single stone.

DAVID

Goliath stood up clear in the assumption of status,
Strong and unquestioning of himself and others,
Fully determined by the limits of his experience.
I have seen such a one among surgeons, sergeants,
Deans, and giants, the power implicit.

Then there was David, who made few assumptions,
Had little experience, but for more was ready,
Testing and trying this pebble or that pebble,
This giant or that giant.
He is not infrequent.

How could Goliath guess, with his many assumptions,
The force of the sling shot of the pure-hearted?
How could David fear, with his few hypotheses,
The power of status which is but two-footed?
So he shot, and shouted!

Josephine Miles

IX. Read "Springtime" and answer questions 67 to 73 from your Questions Booklet.

SPRINGTIME

The neighbors laughed when Miss Amelia went by. The women would shrug their shoulders under their flowered housecoats. The children, repeating what they had heard their parents say, would shout after her, "Crazy old maid! Crazy old maid!"

Miss Amelia wouldn't even deign to lift an eyelid. Stiffly, in her black dress, she would pass on by.

Poor Amelia. It's true she was still a maid, but she wasn't old. Thirty-five, thirty-eight maybe. In the prime of life. And not ugly either. But her face was always ravaged by rage.

From the back she was enticing enough to be followed frequently. By men who were strangers to the neighborhood, it should be noted. Anger, her daily bread, kept her as thin as a gartersnake, gave a spring to her step, and an extraordinary toss to her head. Compared to the old women on the block, she made you think of an unbroken mare in a field of fat cows.

The follower, being attracted to nervous women, would trot along behind. Drawing abreast, he would stop dumbfounded, then hurry right on by. There wasn't a single one who ever thought of anything but escape, followed by the laughter of the natives.

She had a look like a bull whip, did Miss Amelia. You really had to be a stranger not to know its devastating effects.

There was only one person, the lady who lived on the third floor left, who tried to be kind to her. It wasn't easy, yet she didn't give up trying. She was the persevering sort, a woman who followed her notions right through to the end.

Since she was going through her third husband, Miss Amelia's case seemed triply pathetic to her. "The poor thing," she would sigh. "Just put yourself in her shoes. Have you seen those red hot coals in her eyes? She's burning up, she is! It's all very well to say, better marry than burn. But Saint Paul doesn't say what to do when you're only a woman and no husband comes forward."

With that she would pull a little pout for the misogynist saint and then dissolve in pretty smiles and confusion. In her case, husbands flocked forward like indigents to a soup kitchen.

It was mainly her brother Charles, lately come to the neighborhood, whom the wife from the third floor left chose as confidant for her compassion. Charles was fortyish, a shoemaker, and a good-looking man. And like his sister he had a heart that was tender and understanding.

The day he saw the old maid come into his shop with her offended face, he couldn't resist the sudden urge to be a little bit nice to her, just to see. A compliment is quickly made, doesn't cost anything, and can't lead very far. As he was a shoemaker, he looked at her foot, quickly saw that it was slender and nicely arched, and told her as much.

Now it so happened that Miss Amelia had always been quite proud of her feet. Perhaps she had always been waiting for someone to say something nice about them. Perhaps that was all she held against the human race, their ignorance of the fact that

Continued

her feet existed. Her expression softened. She inclined her head gently and gave a little laugh as fresh as a schoolgirl's upon leaving the convent at the end of term.

Down she sat, took off her shoe, and put her foot up on the low stool. Charles felt impelled to rush forward, he knew he should have, but he stood there like a simpleton. The sparkle of her teeth, the curve of her foot, the caress of her laugh, had gone straight to his heart, and he was filled with a kind of fearful joy.

When the worst of his emotion had passed, he got out his finest shoes, shoes that were supple and soft as a girl's cheek. He could see how his trembling hands gave him away, but he didn't care. If a man doesn't speak, you can't slap him for trembling, can you? And apart from a slap he was ready for anything.

Courage! The moment had come. He seized her foot with just the right degree of warmth and slipped it into the shoe. "It fits like a glove! And you notice I didn't even ask your size." It was true. This happy stroke seemed to lend the whole affair a flavor of predestination that was troublesome indeed.

He stayed there holding the narrow foot closely in his hand. She felt the burn through the leather. Silently she savored this unknown happiness, thinking all the while that the other foot was cold too. He let her have the shoes at cost. For him she was already almost the boss. At cost price. And he blushed when he took the money.

Miss Amelia's romance left the neighborhood stunned and bewildered. The news dominated the conversations of the local gossips. Doors and windows filled with heads as she passed by.

That the old maid was loved and in love was already grist to their mill, but even more astounding was her physical appearance. Each day that went by put a little more velvet in her look, a little more satin to her skin, and a sort of abandon in the roll of her hips. Now her ankles betrayed her and she would stumble when she walked out under Charles' admiring gaze. Her knees buckled under the miracle.

The grocer's wife, who had been chosen by her husband because she was solidly built and could stay on her feet behind the counter twelve hours at a stretch without grumbling, and who had accepted because the grocery business is the most serious of all commercial enterprises, followed this metamorphosis with an astonished eye and sighed all day long.

Charles' sister came close to believing that there must be a strain of sorcery in the family. She talked to her third husband at great length about it. So much so that the poor man began to get shivers down his spine whenever she looked at him, as she often did now with a mildly haggard expression as if seeing through him. He couldn't help feeling that the spell hadn't been exhausted yet and that it was a fourth chance at happiness his wife was watching as it advanced through the promise-laden fog of the future.

When Amelia and Charles announced their marriage, the neighborhood breathed a sigh of relief. At last things were going to return to normal. Everyone had managed to survive the courtship, but it would be nice to get back to preoccupations a little less torrid. By the wedding day, interest was already on the wane. The lovers were turning out just like everyone else.

A month hadn't passed before a little of the old Miss Amelia — just a trifle — began to show through. At first just a slight tensing of the nostrils. A few weeks later

and it had spread to her mouth. After six months she had got back the two furrows between her eyebrows. Nobody noticed because nobody was particularly interested anymore. From time to time they would size up the state of her belly, but when that showed no signs of change they thought about something else.

It wasn't till months later that two old cronies, whiling away their time pinching lettuce heads, were struck by a sense of *déja vu* when Miss Amelia walked by. She had completely recovered her prancing gait, her furious face, and her whiplash look.

The two old women burst out laughing and began slapping their thighs. After all, nobody expected that dreamy mood to last a lifetime, did they?

Poor Amelia, would she ever remember anything about that spring, that gentle madness, that brief blossoming?

Claire Martin

X. Read "Marrying Absurd" and answer questions 74 to 80 from your Questions Booklet.

MARRYING ABSURD

To be married in Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, a bride must swear that she is eighteen or has parental permission and a bridegroom that he is twenty-one or has parental permission. Someone must put up five dollars for the license. (On Sundays and holidays, fifteen dollars. The Clark County Courthouse issues marriage licenses at any time of the day or night except between noon and one in the afternoon, between eight and nine in the evening, and between four and five in the morning.) Nothing else is required. The State of Nevada, alone among these United States, demands neither a premarital blood test nor a waiting period before or after the issuance of a marriage license. Driving in across the Mojave from Los Angeles, one sees the signs way out on the desert, looming up from that moonscape of rattlesnakes and mesquite, even before the Las Vegas lights appear like a mirage on the horizon: "GETTING MARRIED? Free License Information First Strip Exit." Perhaps the Las Vegas wedding industry achieved its peak operational efficiency between 9:00 p.m. and midnight of August 26, 1965, an otherwise unremarkable Thursday which happened to be, by Presidential order, the last day on which anyone could improve his draft status merely by getting married. One hundred and seventy-one couples were pronounced man and wife in the name of Clark County and the State of Nevada that night, sixty-seven of them by a single justice of the peace, Mr. James A. Brennan. Mr. Brennan did one wedding at the Dunes and the other sixty-six in his office, and charged each couple eight dollars. One bride lent her veil to six others. "I got it down from five to three minutes," Mr. Brennan said later of his feat. "I could've married them *en masse*, but they're people, not cattle. People expect more when they get married."

What people who get married in Las Vegas actually do expect — what, in the largest sense, their "expectations" are — strikes one as a curious and self-contradictory business. Las Vegas is the most extreme and allegorical of American settlements, bizarre and beautiful in its venality[1] and in its devotion to immediate gratification, a place the tone of which is set by mobsters and call girls and ladies' room attendants with amyl nitrite poppers in their uniform pockets. Almost everyone notes that there is no "time" in Las Vegas, no night and no day and no past and no future (no Las Vegas casino, however, has taken the obliteration of the ordinary time sense quite so far as Harold's Club in Reno, which for a while issued, at odd intervals in the day and night, mimeographed "bulletins" carrying news from the world outside); neither is there any logical sense of where one is. One is standing on a highway in the middle of a vast hostile desert looking at an eighty-foot sign which blinks "STARDUST" or "CAESAR'S PALACE." Yes, but what does that explain? This geographical implausibility reinforces the sense that what happens there has no connection with "real" life; Nevada cities like Reno and Carson are ranch towns, Western towns, places behind which there is some historical imperative. But Las Vegas seems to exist only in the eye of the beholder. All of which makes it an extraordinarily stimulating and interesting place, but an odd one in which to want to wear a candlelight satin Priscilla of Boston

[1]venality — corruption, especially by money

wedding dress with Chantilly lace insets, tapered sleeves, and a detachable modified train.

And yet the Las Vegas wedding business seems to appeal to precisely that impulse. "Sincere and Dignified Since 1954," one wedding chapel advertises. There are nineteen such wedding chapels in Las Vegas, intensely competitive, each offering better, faster, and, by implication, more sincere services than the next: Our Photos Best Anywhere, Your Wedding on a Phonograph Record, Candlelight with Your Ceremony, Honeymoon Accommodations, Free Transportation from Your Motel to Courthouse to Chapel and Return to Motel, Religious or Civil Ceremonies, Dressing Rooms, Flowers, Rings, Announcements, Witnesses Available, and Ample Parking. All of these services, like most others in Las Vegas (sauna baths, payroll-check cashing, chinchilla coats for sale or rent) are offered twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, presumably on the premise that marriage, like craps, is a game to be played when the table seems hot.

Joan Didion

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